

REMARKS

The comments in the Office Action mailed July 26, 2006 have been carefully considered. Claims 1-10 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants reserve the right to pursue claims 1-10 in a continuing application. Claims 11-25 have been newly added. Support for these claims can be found throughout the specification and the figures. No new matter has been added. Consideration and allowance of claims 11-25 is respectfully requested.

Claim Objections

Formal objection has been made to claims 1, 3, and 4 due to informalities. Claims 1, 3, and 4 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, thereby rendering the rejection moot. Applicants assert new claims 11-25 do not include the informalities of claims 1, 3, and 4. Withdrawal of the objection is requested.

Claim Rejections

Claims 1-8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,402,515 to Vidacovich et al. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

To expedite prosecution, however, claims 1-8 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, thereby rendering the rejection moot. Applicants do not otherwise concede the correctness of the rejection and reserve the right to make additional arguments if necessary.

Claim 9 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vidacovich as applied to claim 8, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,787,219 to Mueller et al. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

However, to expedite prosecution, claim 9 has been canceled without prejudice and disclaimer, thereby rendering the rejection moot. Applicants do not otherwise concede the correctness of the rejection and reserve the right to make additional arguments if necessary.

Claim 10 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vidacovich, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,697,874 to Nozick. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

To expedite prosecution, however, claim 10 has been canceled without prejudice and disclaimer, thereby rendering the rejection moot. Applicants do not otherwise concede the correctness of the rejection and reserve the right to make additional arguments if necessary.

New Claims

To the extent the above rejections apply to new claims 11-25, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections.

Claim 11 recites, in part, a first cassette configured to be removed from a housing by uncoupling the first cassette from the housing and unwinding at least some of an excess length of an optical fiber from the first cassette.

None of the cited references, alone or in combination, discloses or suggests a first cassette configured to be removed from a housing by uncoupling the first cassette from the housing and unwinding at least some of an excess length of an optical fiber from the first cassette. The trays in Vidacovich are not removed from the housing, but rather merely pivot in and out of the housing while remaining attached to the housing.

Nozick discloses storing excess fiber on cores external to the coupling trays to enable the trays to be removed from the housing. No suggestion is made in Nozick to remove trays on which excess fiber is stored. Nozick also does not disclose a mechanism to enable such a configuration. Mueller merely discloses a cover that can be removed from a housing. The cover does not store optical fiber and no motivation is provided to modify the cover for such a purpose.

For at least these reasons, Vidacovich does not anticipate claim 11 and would not lead a person skilled in the art to claim 11, even in view of Nozick and Mueller. Claims 12-23 depend from claim 11 and are allowable for at least the same reasons. Consideration and allowance of claims 11-23 is respectfully requested.

Claim 24 recites, in part, removing a cassette for storing excess optical fiber from a housing by moving the cassette in a direction transverse to a spindle of the housing.

Applicants assert claim 24 is allowable over the cited references for at least the same reasons discussed above with respect to claim 11. Claim 25 depends from claim 24 and is allowable for at least the same reasons. Consideration and allowance of claims 24 and 25 is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Reconsideration and allowance of claims 11-25 is respectfully requested. Applicants do not otherwise concede the correctness of the rejections and reserve the right to make additional arguments if necessary.

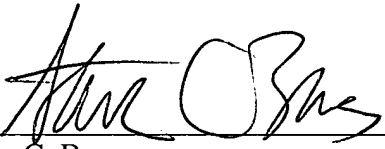
In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: January 26, 2007



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